

**Minutes of the  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION**

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

**Committee Members Present:** Dean Johnston, Bob Moeller, Carrie Wasley, Daniel Shlaferman, Tony Yarusso, Seyon Nyanwleh, Emily Piper

**Committee Members Absent:** Barbara Schmidt, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

**CALL TO ORDER**

After a tour of Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Committee Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9, 2013.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

It was moved by Nyanwleh, seconded by Moeller to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Wasley, seconded by Yarusso to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2013 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

Wasley questioned if a motion to approve the June 4, 2013 minutes was necessary as that meeting did not have a quorum. Secretary Dingle stated that the minutes are an official record of the meeting and noted that they reflect that there was not a quorum present and that all actions were sent to the Council by consensus rather than by a motion/vote. It was moved by Wasley, seconded by Moeller to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2013 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

**PUBLIC INVITATION:** Invitation to interested person to address the Commission on matters not on the agenda.

None.

**BUSINESS**

**Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan, Anoka County** - Jan Youngquist

Youngquist noted that this item is being brought back from the June meeting, where it was tabled due to a lack of quorum. She reviewed her previous presentation as outlined in the materials provided.

Yarusso asked if the \$1.8 million is for the total acquisition of all parcels. Youngquist responded that it is and noted we would pro-rate the amount eligible for the grant.

Nyanwleh clarified what populations referenced are. Youngquist explained that these are projected populations out to 2030 showing an increased need for the trail.

Nyanwleh asked what the timeframe for completion of the trail is. Youngquist stated that as county road projects are done, it will be completed and noted that there are no plans at this time.

Nyanwleh stated that he is concerned with no projected timeline for completion. Youngquist stated that in theory, that would be good but we cannot project fund resources yet to come.

Nyanwleh stated that if this were his community, he would want to know when completion would be expected.

Piper asked how we know what the communities want. Youngquist stated that Anoka County has worked with affected communities when planning for this trail.

Yarusso pointed out that this goes to the Community Development Committee and they also look at all the development plans for cities for housing, etc.

Youngquist stated that the best time to do trail planning is before development and this master plan will ensure that when communities do their comprehensive plan, it will be done in accordance with planned regional trails.

Nyanwleh stated that he feels if we award money, we should know when the project will be done.

Yarusso motioned and it was seconded by Wasley to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Notify Anoka County that acquisition of land or easements to supplement the right-of-way along existing County roadways up to a total width of 120 feet is eligible for regional parks funding. If Anoka County acquires entire parcels along the corridor, the portion of the property that is not needed for the regional trail shall not be eligible for regional parks funding.

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried, with Nyanwleh voting nay.

### **Hardwood Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Washington County - Jan Youngquist**

Youngquist gave a presentation outlining the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail Master Plan submitted by Washington County for approval as described in the materials provided.

Nyanwleh asked if there is a timeline for this proposal. Youngquist stated we do not know when the rail line will be vacated. She discussed a proposed interim route.

Yarusso clarified that this is the first master plan for this trail. Youngquist confirmed that it is and noted that previous trail development was federally funded.

Moeller asked if the County would pay for the interim connections. Youngquist stated that the County will coordinate with local jurisdictions, but it will not be paid for with regional funds.

Shlaferman asked, long-term, what is the likelihood it will continue south into Ramsey County. Youngquist responded it is not known and stated we have not approved a master plan for Ramsey County.

Shlaferman motioned and it was seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require that prior to development of new trail segments, Washington County should send development plans to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the regional interceptor system, specifically MCES Interceptor 7029.

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried, with Nyanwleh abstaining.

### **North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment, Grant Request and Reimbursement Consideration Request, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board - Jan Youngquist**

Youngquist reviewed three requests from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as described in the materials provided. They include:

1. North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment.
2. Grant request to partially finance the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse, and site improvements.
3. Consideration request for reimbursement from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund account for construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements at North Mississippi Regional Park, when the amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds in accordance with state law.

Yarusso clarified the procedure. Youngquist stated that state law trumps over our policy plan. This master plan is complying with state law. Yarusso asked if the motions should be made separately for the three requests. Stefferud stated that they could be.

Wasley asked how we can bind a future body to finance. Stefferud described the history behind these funds that can only be used for North Mississippi Regional Park. Youngquist further clarified that the Council does require prior approval to the start of the project.

Moeller stated that essentially, we are approving a letter of intent.

Youngquist stated we need to approve expenditures before the project starts, then they need to come back and request reimbursement.

Nyanwleh clarified that this is consistent with Council policy and state law. Youngquist confirmed.

Chair Johnston called for a motion of proposed action items 1-3. Piper motioned and it was seconded by Yarusso to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment.
2. Require that prior to development, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall send development plans to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the regional interceptor system.
3. Require that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board provide more detail and submit estimated costs for the development projects that were not quantified in the master plan for Metropolitan Council review and approval prior to seeking future grants.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnston called for a motion of proposed action item 4. Nyanwleh motioned and it was seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

4. Approve a development grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund, comprised of interest earnings on Metropolitan Council park bond accounts in accordance with State law. This grant shall be used to partially finance the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnston called for a motion of proposed action item 5. Moeller motioned and it was seconded by Schlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

5. Consider reimbursing the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board up to \$1,000,000 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund account for the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements at North Mississippi Regional Park, when that amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds in accordance with State law.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

## INFORMATION

### **Information Item: Status and Anticipated Demand for Regional Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grants - Raintry Salk and Arne Stefferud**

Salk gave a presentation on the status and anticipated demand for park acquisition opportunity fund grants as requested by the Commission at its June meeting.

Salk reviewed grant request estimates for FY 2014 as outlined in the staff report provided. She discussed the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) and the Parks and Trails Legacy Land Acquisition Fund (PTLF) and potential shortfalls as well as potential solutions. She also discussed an additional funding option which entails the Council issuing an additional \$1.5 million of park bonds to be added to the ENRTF. This would require approval and action of the Metropolitan Council.

Salk reviewed the first two potential solutions (described in detail in the materials provided) and Stefferud reviewed the third as follows:

1. Issue Metropolitan Council Park bonds (additional \$1.5M to the ENRTF)
2. Collaborate with park implementing agencies to spread current anticipated land acquisition grants over the time span of the next two years
3. Spread the current anticipated land acquisition grants over two years, omit the \$1.7 million cap on both accounts and utilize a formula wherein each agency's proportion of the total acquisition costs is applied to the actual funding available, plus reserve 15% for unanticipated acquisitions

Wasley asked if the agencies were asked what their anticipated acquisition needs were for the next 12 months or 24 months? Stefferud stated they were asked for 12 months, as a 24 month period is too uncertain.

Wasley noted that there are 10 implementing agencies (IA's) and only 6 responded and asked about the 4 that didn't. Stefferud stated that's where unanticipated funds come in.

Yarusso asked if fund totals are replenished every year or every two years. Stefferud responded that the PTLF is funded on July 1 of every year automatically. A request is needed every year for the ENRTF.

Stefferud reported that Schmidt stated these are 'wish lists' for the agencies.

Wasley noted that 60% of the IA's are locking in 85% of the funds and the remaining 40% of the IA's are left with only 15% - she has trouble with this. Stefferud stated that 40% of the IA's didn't have any requests. Wasley pointed out that this is a 24 month finance plan for 12 months of requests.

Moeller agreed with Wasley and shared his concern with 4 IA's not having any requests 'yet'.

Johnston stated that this is a problem we've learned about and stated the questions is – where do we go from here?

Piper asked what the impact or downside of asking the Metropolitan Council to issue an additional \$1.5 million in bonds. Stefferud stated that there is little issue with it. He also discussed considering asking for flexibility from the Legislature to have a pay as you go, rather than issuing bonds and paying down debt.

Moeller suggested asking for more than \$1.5 million in bonds. Stefferud stated you can ask but need to consider what the fiscal impact is and will the Legislature allow us to issue more bonds.

Stefferud noted that a change in the Regional Parks Policy Plan would require a hearing. He discussed the potential to run out of money.

Mark Themig, Three Rivers stated that this is a great problem to have. He gave some history of how funds for PTLF formula was developed and noted that the IA's spent a lot of time doing so. He suggested the IA's could sit down together without reinventing the process and come up with some solutions as well.

Mike Kimble, St. Paul suggested first come, first served. In the second year of the biennium, IA's would sit down and figure out how to divide money – if there is any leftover.

Stefferud stated this is correct. This is a new circumstance. Kimble asked would this be a short term solution. Stefferud stated probably not. If there was money left over in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, we may need to revisit.

Salk stated the issue here is that we will run out of money in a few months.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers suggested staff meet with IA's to work through this happy problem.

Yarusso pointed out that the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan has specific language that states "do not lock funding into a set formula".

Nyanwleh agreed with Vlaming's suggestion.

Yarusso made a motion that:

1. IA's meeting and bring forth consensus recommendations
2. Staff ask IA's to submit anticipated requests for 2015
3. Staff shows (in tables) funding with and without \$1.5 million bonds

Johnston asked if there is a timetable for this motion.

Wasley asked why we need a motion and stated she didn't feel it was needed. Johnston responded it is to give staff direction.

Stefferdud asked if the Commission would like a second meeting this month to discuss further. Commissioners felt the IA's and staff should meet first to look at further solutions.

Johnston asked for a second to Yarusso's motion. No one seconded the motion. The motion failed.

Nyanwleh agreed with Wasley and stated direction to staff to meet with IA's is all that is needed.

Moeller stated that he has found the discussion very helpful and feels that the IA's and staff can meet and come back with a consensus.

Stefferdud stated the goal then will be to come back in August with more analysis.

Yarusso asked if this will fit into the August agenda.

Moeller stated he feels this needs to be done right but at a time table that works best for quality.

## **BUSINESS (Continued)**

### **Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve – Albrecht-Hutchinson parcels, Scott County - Tori Dupre**

Dupre gave a presentation on a grant request from Scott County and noted that this request will zero out the ENRTF until next July. The PTLF account balance will be \$2,302,109.00.

Stefferdud reviewed the outcome using solution #3.

Dupre reviewed staff's recommendations. Stefferud noted that these are based on the rules, as they are today.

Yarusso asked if \$1.5 million bond could become available immediately. Stefferud stated it would have to be issued first.

Yarusso asked about 32 acres and if there are restrictions on the use of this land. He asked if it could be subdivided and multiple homes built. Themig clarified that due to medical conditions the home may not be built at all. The current zoning is 1 per 40 acres, so the most they could build is one home.

Moeller motioned and it was seconded by Shlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$260,358 to Scott County to finance up to 75% of the acquisition costs of the 10 acre parcel of the Albrecht-Hutchinson property containing the house and barn illustrated in Attachment 2. The grant is financed with:

\$156,215 of FY 2013 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (PTLF) appropriation

\$104,413 Metropolitan Council bonds

This grant must be matched with up to \$86,786 of Scott County funds to finance 25% of the 10 acre parcel.

1. Approve a grant of up to \$799,116 to finance 75% of the acquisition of the 107.4 acre parcel and 132.65 acre parcel illustrated in Attachment 2. The grant is financed with:

\$156,215 of 2012 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENTRF) appropriation

\$178,735 of FY 2013 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (PTLF) appropriation

\$300,735 of FY 2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation

\$319,646 of Metropolitan Council bonds

This grant must be matched with up to \$266,372 of Scott County funds to finance 25% of these parcels remaining acquisition costs.

1. Permit the Scott County matching funds to these grants of up to \$353,158 be eligible for reimbursement consideration as part of Scott County's share of future regional park capital improvement programs. The Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
2. Release the restrictive covenant on the 31.76 acre parcel illustrated in Attachment 4 as "Proposed Land Exchange" in exchange for reducing the amount paid to the Albrecht-Hutchinson \$256,167 –the value of the 31.76 acre parcel.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

## **REPORTS**

**Staff:** Stefferud gave a quick update on funding requests to the Legislature.

**Chair:** Reported that he attended the Carver County Park grand opening.

**Commissioners:** None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary